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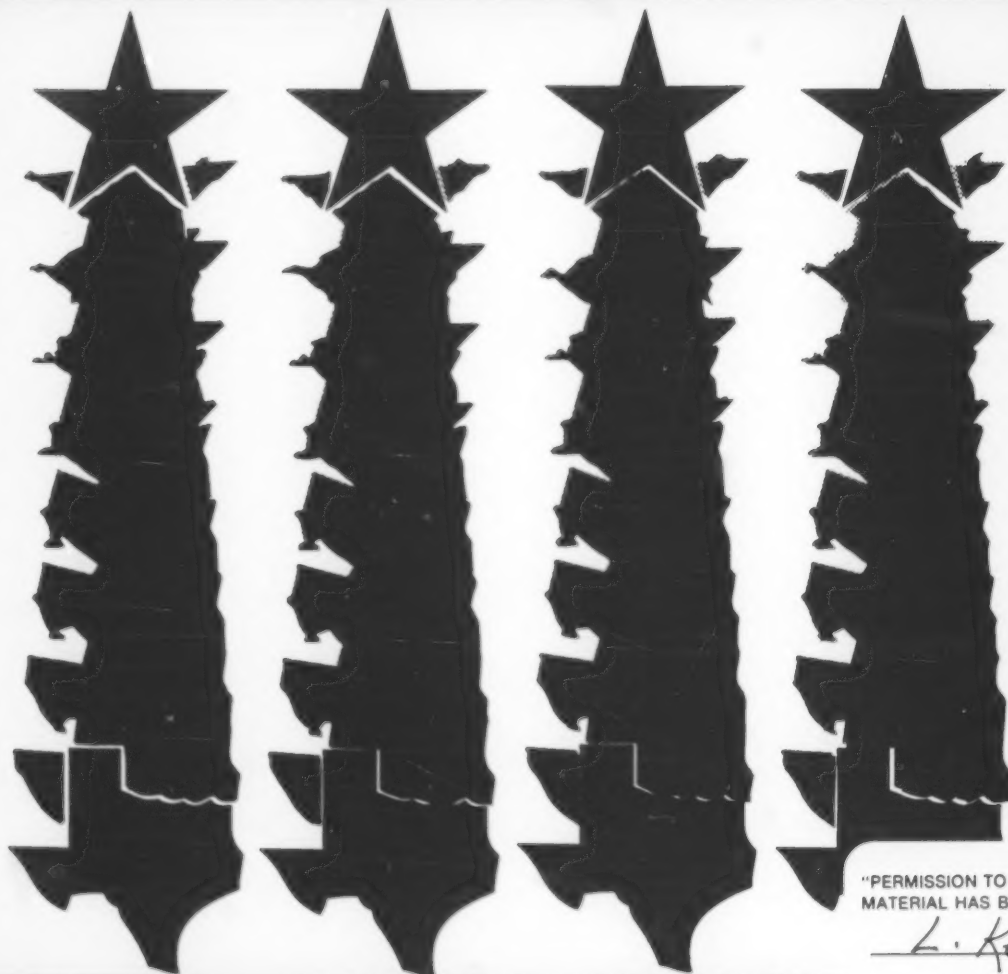
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ABSTRACT

The current status of the curriculum in Texas public schools and the implications for future curriculum changes are examined in this report mandated by state House Bill 246. The report provides a 5-year overview for both general and vocational education from December 1986 through December 1990. Following an executive summary, the introduction reviews the history of state curriculum legislation and highlights state curriculum goals. The second section describes curriculum responses to needs in general education--which include changes in curriculum requirements, the textbook adoption process, student assessment, and staff evaluation--and to needs in vocational education and teacher preparation. A compliance statement is included. (LMI)

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THE STATUS OF THE CURRICULUM IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FROM THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY
AUSTIN, TEXAS

JANUARY 1991

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THE STATUS OF THE CURRICULUM IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

From the State Board of Education

**Submitted to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor,
And the Seventy-Second Texas Legislature**

1989-1990

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January 1991

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The Honorable Ann W. Richards, Governor of Texas
The Honorable Bob Bullock, Lieutenant Governor of Texas
The Honorable Gibson D. Lewis, Speaker of the House
Members of the 72nd Legislature:

The State Board of Education is pleased to provide this report on the implementation of Section 21.101, Texas Education Code. The report covers the state's activities relating to curriculum issues from December 1986 to December 1990. Included is an overview of the current status of the curriculum for both general education and vocational education.

The Status of the Curriculum in the Public Schools is based on the first five-year review of the state's curriculum. Chapter 75 of the Texas Administrative Code requires that during the 1990-91 school year and every five years thereafter the board review and evaluate the continued appropriateness of the required essential elements of instruction and other provisions of the chapter. The rule requires the commissioner of education to secure and submit to the board evaluative information regarding the appropriateness of the essential elements, grade-level designations, and other aspects of the chapter.

To fulfill the requirements of the law and board rule, the Texas Education Agency instituted a systematic process of annual curriculum review meetings. Input received from the meetings held during 1986-90 provided information for the board, some of which is included in this report.

This report was approved by the State Board of Education at its meeting January 19, 1991, and is transmitted to you as required by state law.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Honea Crawford, Chairman
State Board of Education

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Development of this report, *The Status of the Curriculum in the Public Schools*, is one of the mandates of House Bill 246 of the 67th Legislature. HB 246 revised §21.101 of the Texas Education Code and established a systematic structure for the development and implementation of a sound curriculum for the State of Texas. The State Board of Education was given the responsibility of establishing the essential elements for the 12 subject areas that school districts in the state are required to offer. Furthermore, the bill requires the State Board to transmit a report on the status of the curriculum in the public schools to the governor, lieutenant governor, and legislature. Although, according to the bill, the report may include recommendations for changes necessary to improve, modify, or add to the curriculum, the current report contains no specific legislative recommendations. It states that the State Board is undertaking in 1991 a complete study of recommendations that have been made at annual curriculum review meetings, 1986-1990, by a variety of educators from over the state. Based on the study, the State Board will change the rules for curriculum as needed. This report outlines how the state is responding to the curricular needs of students, both in general education and vocational education.

INTRODUCTION

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The 71st Texas Legislature passed what may have been a record number of new laws affecting the Texas public school system during its regular session and its six called sessions. Included in the legislation was Senate Bill 417, the Texas Education Agency sunset bill, which continues the Central Education Agency through 2001. The responses of the Agency and the State Board of Education to legislation over the past decade, beginning with House Bill 246 of the 67th Texas Legislature in 1981 and including relevant bills and resolutions passed by the 71st Legislature in 1990, are discussed in this report.

The report covers the present status of the state curriculum for Texas public schools as well as implications for future changes in the curriculum. The state's mandated curriculum was required to be implemented by Texas school districts in 1985-86. The curriculum is comprised of State Board of Education-approved essential elements and subelements of instruction for required subjects and courses. The essential elements are defined as representing those core areas of knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills that must be included in instruction and that each student must be provided an opportunity to learn to be an effective and productive member of society. Districts are urged to expand and add to the essential elements, but they may not delete any. In addition, districts establish learner outcomes or expectations based upon the needs of students within the district.

The required curriculum was mandated by HB 246 passed by the Texas Legislature in 1981. Today, provisions of HB 246 begin with Section 21.101 of the Texas Education Code (TEC). The State Board of Education rules for implementing the law are contained in Title 19, Chapter 75 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC).

In 1990, a five-year curriculum review was completed in which various review groups made recommendations for changes in the essential elements and other provisions of Chapter 75. To provide for an ongoing evaluation, the State Board had adopted a rule (Section 75.5) calling for five-year reviews beginning in 1990-91. Based upon the results of these assessments, the Board will modify its rules as appropriate.

To help prepare for the first full-scale modification of Chapter 75, annual curriculum reviews were conducted from 1986 to 1990. Zone meetings were held in education service centers over the state. Participants included hundreds of Texas educators representing general education subjects and courses, vocational education programs, and programs serving special populations, including gifted/talented, bilingual, and special education.

This broad range of teachers and administrators reflected the composition of the diverse groups of educators who were joined in the early 1980s by policymakers and private citizens from throughout the state in drafting the original essential elements. The recommendations of these individuals were reviewed by advisory groups and discussed in a series of public meetings. In March 1984, the State Board approved the essential elements now specified in Chapter 75.

The purpose of HB 246, which mandated that the Board list the essential elements for identified subjects and courses of a well-balanced curriculum, was to improve student achievement by extensively upgrading the curriculum and making it more uniform. The passage of HB 246 reflected widespread concern about education in the state at the time. The former curriculum had become overcrowded with a variety of topics, leaving confusion and uncertainty about what was of critical importance for teachers to teach and for students to learn. Subjects, courses, and students' time-on-task varied considerably from district to district, campus to campus, and classroom to classroom. Educators and others feared that wide variations, given the highly mobile Texas population, limited student access to a basic and consistent curriculum.

Thus, during the past two years, the state basic curriculum has been continually reviewed and refined, and school districts have received assistance in implementing the curriculum in Texas schools. A number of changes in Board rule have been made during this time as needed.

A SOUND STATE CURRICULUM

State laws establish goals for education and require the State Board to develop and implement four-year plans for achieving the goals. The first plan covered 1986-90; this plan has now been revised for 1991-95. In the new plan, the Board has reiterated its commitment to providing a well-balanced and appropriate curriculum for all students in the state. Plans are to strengthen the state curriculum, including requirements for promotion and graduation. Strategies that will assist students in developing creative and critical thinking and problem-solving skills, citizenship skills, and self-esteem and self-responsibility will be incorporated in the state curriculum and into proclamations calling for new textbooks. Toward strengthening public school education, coordinated efforts will align the state curriculum, the statewide student testing program, textbook adoptions, and state-level staff development efforts. Policies, curricula, and programs relating to students with special needs will be reviewed and revised. Vocational education courses will be revised through the reinforcement of basic and academic skills, technological developments in business and industry, knowledge of emerging career opportunities, employer recommendations, and regional planning for occupational education and training. In addition, curricula will be developed to enable children with handicaps to master the academic, social, vocational, and living skills they need for productive lives. Transition programs will be developed for students of limited English proficiency, and textbooks will provide curriculum for these students.

The Long-Range Plan for 1991-95 directs teachers and principals to adapt their schools and classrooms to the needs, learning styles, and learning rates of individual students including the gifted, economically disadvantaged, and at-risk as well as those in the broad middle of the academic spectrum. Districts are urged to focus on instruction, integrate technology, and adapt the state curriculum for local needs.

STATE CURRICULUM: RESPONSES TO NEEDS

The needs of students and society have been identified through the systematic process of curriculum review and through legislative bills and resolutions. The Texas Education Agency staff and the State Board of Education have attempted to respond to these needs through their role as leaders in curriculum. They have looked at what is happening in education not only in Texas but in the nation and around the world.

Extensive interfacing with other agencies and councils constitutes an effort to increase interagency coordination. For example, a joint memorandum of understanding exists between the Texas Education Agency and seven other state agencies to implement a system of local-level interagency staffing groups to coordinate services for multiproblem children and youth. Nineteen governmental and nongovernmental entities, including the Agency, are working together on the Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenthood Advisory Council (APPAC). The Council was established by Senate Bill 298 of the 70th Legislature, amended by SB 417 of the 71st Legislature. The purpose of the Council is to develop a resource network for adolescent pregnancy education and services by coordinating policies and programs of state and local agencies.

The Texas Education Agency has also continued to coordinate its own efforts. For example, business education and vocational office education courses were revised to eliminate duplication and redundancy. General education staff representing social studies, language arts, science, and mathematics are working with vocational education staff to develop linkages in instruction based around shared essential elements, as appropriate. Also, social studies and language specialists have begun to broaden the international dimensions of both content areas.

As staff members attempt to determine what is appropriate curriculum, they coordinate with specialists for the gifted/talented, bilingual and other special populations, and early childhood education. They have worked extensively together to develop recommendations for curriculum improvements.

GENERAL EDUCATION

Major strides are being made in the elementary school curricula to encourage the teaching of higher order thinking skills and to foster the integration of these skills throughout the elementary curriculum. As these students move to higher grade levels, the increasing emphasis on higher order skills should permeate the secondary level as well.

Integration of curriculum is another new thrust in Texas public education. Curriculum reviewers have recommended further study of elementary curriculum rules and essential elements to facilitate interdisciplinary instruction. They also recommended increasing the relevancy of the middle school/junior high school curriculum to student needs and the integration into appropriate courses at these grade levels of more problem-solving skills, character education, health-related issues, and societal issues. For all grade levels, they recommended an integrated curriculum, both in teachers' approaches to instruction and in students' approaches to learning. These recommendations are being reviewed and considered for implementation as new textbooks and materials are made available.

In response to Senate Bill 1, passed by the Sixth Called Session of the 71st Legislature, the State Board in the fall of 1990 deleted all reference to rules requiring methodology and teaching time. The methods that teachers must use in teaching a particular course are no longer specified nor is the amount of time

that teachers and students must spend on a particular subject or task. Thus districts are provided flexibility and more accountability in determining the amounts of time for teachers to teach the essential elements and the time for students to learn them.

CHANGES IN CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

As a result of the review of the curriculum and in response to legislation, the State Board has modified its rules accordingly. The modifications have benefited a number of content areas such as the following:

English Language Arts

The emphasis in the language arts has been shifted to provide an integrated course of study with all aspects of language arts addressed during instruction. The integrated approach reflects the importance of all the program's components: reading, language, handwriting, spelling, composition, literature.

To help meet the needs of dyslexic students, the State Board passed a rule outlining procedures that school districts must follow in serving these students. In addition, a full-time professional position was added to the Division of General Education, Texas Education Agency, to work exclusively on dyslexia-related issues.

Health Education

The Agency has continued to make available to school districts a comprehensive, age-appropriate health education curriculum as called for in SCR 61 and as specified in 19 TAC Chapter 75, Curriculum. Support of technical assistance for school districts has been promoted through the regional education service centers. Documents focused on education for self-responsibility and promoting prevention of school-age pregnancy, prevention of drug use, and HIV/AIDS education are being developed and disseminated to school districts. New textbooks for health education, Grades 1-6, were in use in classrooms beginning in the 1987-88 school year. These new texts support the comprehensive, age-appropriate health education curriculum and reflect the Board-mandated essential elements in health that address such areas as sex education, sexually transmitted diseases; a no-use message relative to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; education for self-responsibility; etc.

The comprehensive school health program also addresses critical current health issues such as suicide prevention, parenting skills, and nutrition. A number of specific activities of the extensive program include the following:

- Pilot programs providing services for pregnant and parenting students are designed to help keep students in school. The programs provide various services ranging from classes on parenting and nutrition to child care on campus or at a nearby private facility. Students as young as fifth graders have been served. For 1990-91, the second year of the programs, services provided at 52 selected pilot sites are expected to reach 3,091 school-age parents and 2,490 infants.
- In another health-related program, drug-use prevention education is reaching students in prekindergarten through high school. The federally funded program stresses the hazards of drugs illegal to minors, including alcohol and tobacco, and cautions against the misuse of legal medications and over-the-counter drugs. The U.S. Drug-Free Schools and Communities program has allocated \$54 million to Texas in the last two years. Some funds were spent to oversee development of a curriculum guide which is tailored to fit almost all subjects in all grade levels. Included are videotapes and teacher staff development materials. The drug use prevention program is considered a national model and is being used in other states and some foreign countries.
- Although data collection requested by SCR 61 and SB 417 has not yet begun, current modifications of the Public Education Information Management System to include student data collection will make

this information available. Data will include districts' reports on their health education programs and will provide an indication of stimulant use by students, both requested by the 71st Legislature.

Languages

- In response to HCR 194, revised curriculum rules emphasize the importance of international education by strengthening the role of foreign languages in the elementary and secondary school curriculum. The State Board of Education's Long-Range Plan proposes that foreign language instruction be offered in kindergarten through Grade 12.
- In response to SB 1183, American Sign Language was approved to satisfy high school foreign language requirements. Essential elements will be developed.

Mathematics

- Under the impact of SB 417, higher order thinking skills receive greater emphasis in mathematics. The mathematics curriculum has been expanded beyond computational skills to emphasize applications, technology, problem solving, and concept development.
- Mathematics essential elements have been updated and aligned with National Council of Teachers of Mathematics standards. In addition to changes toward higher order thinking skills, fewer concepts are introduced at each grade level, and they are covered in more depth.

Science

- The State Board has initiated the adoption of electronic instructional materials for the first time for elementary science. The materials that will go into use in the schools in the fall of 1991 may include electronic media systems. These systems may be selected in lieu of traditional textbooks by districts that prefer to implement interactive instructional programs via such technology as computer courseware and videodiscs.
- Toward a coordinated approach in elementary science instruction, new essential elements have been adopted that districts must implement by the fall of 1991 when new textbooks will be available.
- A restructuring of the science curriculum, Grades 7-10, is proposed that will provide all students with a thematic, coordinated curriculum. The restructuring of the science curriculum is in response to educators, legislators, policy makers, and business leaders who have expressed concern that science education in Texas is not meeting the needs of students and the demands of a highly competitive world.

Social Studies

- In response to HCR 41, specifications require new U.S. History and U.S. Government textbooks to place more emphasis on the study of fundamental documents. According to specifications listed in Proclamations 67 and 68, texts will cover the political and economic philosophies of the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, and the Federalist Papers. They will include arguments for and against the ratification of the Constitution by the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists and will contain copies of the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights and all other amendments, and selections from the Federalist Papers and Anti-Federalists writings. Future proclamations will require elementary social studies texts for U.S. history to include copies of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution including the Bill of Rights.
- Essential elements for attitudes, values, and skills related to the social studies are now assigned to be taught in secondary courses, according to the established textbook adoption timeline. Previously, these essential elements were included in courses at district discretion.

Physical Education

Physical education programs have been impacted by a number of issues such as the substitution of off-campus commercial programs for on-campus physical education, the approval of several substitutions such as marching band and ROTC for physical education, and the granting of physical education waivers for individual students who prefer to receive specific training in activities such as ballet, for example. When reviewing Chapter 75 rules during 1991, the State Board will consider making changes in physical education requirements, placing increased emphasis on physical fitness.

THE TEXTBOOK ADOPTION PROCESS

HB 884 authorized the State Board to appoint separate State Textbook Subject Area Committees as needed for each subject or course to replace the previous single State Textbook Committee. Each committee, composed of 15 members, reviews and recommends textbooks for adoption. Subject Area Committees appointed for Proclamation 66 met during the summer of 1990. Other new committees are Textbook Proclamation Advisory Committees, also appointed for each subject area. These Committees develop the content of proclamations that the Board issues to call for textbooks to be submitted by publishers.

In response to SB 650 which mandated the incorporation of technology, each proclamation that calls for textbooks includes language making it possible for electronic instructional materials to replace traditional textbooks. In addition, students are using technology in a variety of other ways as they study business education, industrial technology, and mathematics, for example. And local districts are encouraged to provide more opportunities for the use of technology as textbook proclamations call for textbooks that require it.

The State Board approved several other amendments designed to improve the adoption and distribution process, including a change that eliminates the publication of supplementary instructional materials lists since these materials are not reviewed or sanctioned by the Agency. Current rules are also being reviewed as a response to SB 1. Also, the State Board altered the process for making changes in the essential elements to coincide with the adoption of textbooks. School districts are required to implement new essential elements when new textbooks are in the schools.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

The 1990-91 school year is a period of transition for the statewide student assessment program which began in 1980. A new test, Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) replaced the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) beginning in the fall of 1990. The new examinations are more rigorous than TEAMS in that they measure skills such as complex thinking and problem solving, whereas TEAMS focused on minimum-level skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Science and social studies will be phased in to TAAS by 1994-95.

Like TEAMS, the new tests provide an assessment of the achievement of each student who takes the examinations. Student performance on TAAS also will be one of several key performance indicators used to accredit school districts, to make cash and recognition awards to local schools, and to identify exemplary schools eligible for waivers from state education laws and rules. As with TEAMS, each student will have to pass the program's exit-level test to receive a high school diploma.

Whereas the TEAMS tests at Grades 3, 5, 7, and 9 were usually administered in February, the TAAS tests will be given in October. The new schedule will provide students and school districts more time to use TAAS results in their instructional planning for the year. In response to recommendations of the State Board, the 71st Legislature eliminated Grade 1 from the statewide assessment.

Passing standards for TAAS will be put into effect over a two-year period to give students and school districts time to adjust to the new, tougher examinations. For the academic skills level of the test—the

level at which students must perform to pass the examinations, the passing level is 60 percent of the items correct for the tests at Grade 7, Grade 9, and the exit level; the passing level is 65 percent of the items correct for the third- and fifth-grade tests for the 1990-91 school year. Students in all grades tested will have to answer correctly 70 percent of the test items to pass the tests beginning with the 1991-92 school year. The State Board will review data from the first TAAS administration and may revise the passing standards for subsequent administrations.

As the statewide assessments have changed from the testing of minimum-level skills to the testing of higher level thinking and problem-solving skills, concerns have arisen as to the test's appropriateness. Some educators are questioning whether TAAS will result in extensive denial of diplomas to students. A study should perhaps be conducted of the entire process of assessment and testing to ensure that current and future tests meet the intent of the original testing program instigated by the Texas Legislature.

To date, results of statewide assessment show that the long-term education reforms for public education passed by the Legislature in 1984 are having the desired effect of improving the educational performance of students. The preliminary results of the February 1990 TEAMS tests indicated that students for four years made steady progress in mastering the skills assessed by the examinations. Measures such as the 22-to-one pupil/teacher ratio and the prekindergarten program for disadvantaged and limited English proficient four-year-old children have enabled local school districts to assist more students in mastering the required essential elements of instruction. In general, test results show that these efforts are paying off. Ninth grade scores, however, have not improved as rapidly as the scores at other grade levels. The primary reason may be that much of the education reforms focus on the early grades where the greatest growth in test scores has been seen. While continued improvement is not expected overnight, it is expected to be steady.

Texas educators anticipate that, in time, the education reforms will also impact other assessments such as the College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). In 1990, the College Board released data indicating that students who take a good selection of courses in English, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign languages, and fine arts tend to do better on the SAT. The more years of academic study in challenging academic courses, the higher the average SAT score. The College Board's data substantiate the State Board's own findings which led to a concern that parents and students be made aware of the correspondence between higher level courses and SAT scores. In 1989, the Board passed a rule that school boards of trustees must adopt policies that include plans for annually informing parents and students of recommended courses for students preparing to attend college. The Board continues to be concerned, however, about nonrigorous, low-level courses and will reconsider the appropriateness of these courses for high school graduation credit during their 1991 curriculum revision process.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The need for effective, relevant staff development was a major concern of the Texas educators participating in the five-year curriculum review. In virtually all curriculum areas, reviewers called for inservice instruction that demonstrates effective presentation of the essential elements and that shows relationships across the disciplines in all grades.

The State Board recognizes the importance of providing specialized training for teaching new components of the curriculum as they emerge. In the Long-Range Plan, several objectives relate to staff development. To implement these objectives, the Agency is developing comprehensive staff development, technical assistance, and inservice programs to help districts and campuses meet state and local goals and to address the learning needs of all students. The Agency is working with the regional education service centers to provide these programs at the local level. Standards for inservice training of professional educators will be continually refined to reflect current effective schools practices.

Examples of state-level staff development products include:

- **Art education.** A statewide staff development program to support instruction in the essential elements of art was initiated in 1989-90. State, federal, and private funds, plus representatives from a university, local school districts, and some education service centers, assisted the Agency in developing materials and providing staff development programs to improve art instruction, prekindergarten-Grade 12. More than 250 workshops on integrating art essential elements were presented by trained facilitators throughout the state during 1989-90.
- **English language arts and reading.** In the summer of 1990, staff members developed training packets and conducted a series of inservice workshops at the Agency for the state's largest 100 school districts and the education service centers. Workshops around the state were presented for groups of smaller districts. The workshops were designed to familiarize teachers with the process of integrating all the components of language arts. Research strongly indicates that the integrated approach is more effective than teaching the components separately.
- **Health education.** During the past two years, Texas received almost \$900,000 from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control for staff development in HIV prevention education. Workshops were presented at the education service centers that included Texas counties with the largest number of AIDS cases. Every service center will participate in the program in 1991. Training packets that include manuals and videotapes are being developed. Other health-related staff development emphasizes cancer prevention. The Texas Cancer Council provided \$1.4 million from 1988-90 to pay for health specialists in 16 of the 20 service centers. The specialists provide comprehensive health education with a focus on cancer prevention.
- **Mathematics.** A federally funded Mathematics Staff Development Project consists of 24 modules that provide training for teachers, K-Grade 12. The modules are presented by well-prepared trainers in education service centers and school districts around the state.
- **Science.** A science safety training package has been developed and used with facilitators from the education service centers. The facilitators, who in turn instruct teachers, have learned laboratory safety procedures and the measures needed to comply with state and federal laws and regulations. By Summer 1991, over 6,000 science teachers will complete their training and receive materials on science laboratory safety and chemical wastes disposal. Under development with federal Title II funds are elementary staff development and assessment modules for teacher training in the summer of 1991.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

CHANGES IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Beginning with the 1989-90 school year, the following four new vocational education courses were available to secondary schools:

- **Principles of Technology I.** An applied physics course that includes study in force, work, rate, resistance, energy, power, and force transformers as applied to mechanical, fluid, thermal, and electrical energy systems. The course includes the mathematics that students need to understand and apply the principles studied.
- **Principles of Technology II.** A second-year applied physics course that includes study in momentum, waves and vibrations, energy convertors, transducers, radiation, optical systems, and time constants as applied to mechanical, fluid, thermal, and electrical energy systems. The mathematics that students need to understand and apply the principles studied is included.

- **Basic Vocational Education.** A course that is designed to prepare special needs students to enter other vocational education programs. Students served include academically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities who are at risk of dropping out of school. The course assists students to develop self-awareness, good study habits and skills, and productive work habits; to learn consumer management concepts; to study occupational awareness, exploration, and career decision making; to access counselling and guidance; and to obtain a comprehensive vocational interest and aptitude assessment.
- **Individualized Vocational Education.** A course designed to provide a community-based-and-supported work model of instruction for severely handicapped students who receive special education instruction during 50 percent or more of the school day. The program provides instruction in varied supported work models including individual placement by a job coach, in mobile work crews, and in enclaves in industry.

In addition to these four new courses, Parenting for School-Age Parents is an experimental vocational home economics education course that is now being offered in over 70 school districts. The course content is designed for parents and addresses personal development, parenthood roles, prenatal and postnatal care, development of children from birth to three years, special concerns in the family, and management. School-age parents receive experience in applying appropriate techniques for fostering the intellectual, emotional, social, and physical development of children.

MASTER PLAN FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

A 1990 update of Career Opportunities in Texas: A Master Plan for Vocational Education included only two changes to the Plan which was first adopted by the State Board of Education in 1987. Coordinated Vocational-Academic Education programs at Grades 7 and 8 were eliminated, and the approvable grade range for offering Career Investigation was expanded from Grades 7-8 to Grades 7-9. Significant changes are anticipated to be required in the 1991 update of the Plan due to the approaching implementation of the recently reauthorized Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act, which takes effect in July 1991.

TEACHER PREPARATION

The State Board of Education has implemented provisions of SB 417 that make it clear that alternative certification programs are not contingent upon teacher shortages. The Bill mandated the elimination of a needs-based requirement for alternative certification proposals and expanded the pool of candidates for alternative certification by allowing individuals with education degrees or certified teachers access to an alternative certification program.

Under the alternative teacher certification program, an individual who has a bachelor's degree can become certified to teach in public schools by completing coursework, training, and a rigorous one-year internship. The internship must be taken in an alternative teacher certification program approved by the State Board. Since its inception in 1985, the alternative teacher certification program has grown from one program in the 1985-86 school year to 16 programs in 1989-90.

The State Board's Long-Range Plan calls for setting standards for the profession and ensuring that all personnel demonstrate competence in professional skills. The Texas Education Agency plans to strengthen professional preparation programs of teachers and administrators by working with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and by monitoring and evaluating all certification and alternative certification processes. In addition, funds for increased teacher salaries will be sought, working environments will be enhanced, and teacher and administrator standards will be revised.

GENERAL EDUCATION

- **Business education.** A proposed change in the certification of business education teachers would collapse the four existing business education certifications into one with three possible endorsements: short hand, office education, information processing technology. A new course, Microcomputer Applications, may be offered in either business education or vocational education; teachers are approved to cross over into each other's departments to teach the course.
- **Early childhood.** The State Board has strengthened the requirements for prekindergarten teachers to bring the requirements in line with those for kindergarten teachers. Beginning in the fall of 1991, new prekindergarten teachers must possess early childhood education endorsements to their elementary teaching certificates or be assigned under permits for those areas and pursue deficiency plans toward certification.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The teacher certification program for office education teachers was modified in the fall of 1989. The amended Board rule eliminates the options for nondegreed individuals to qualify for certification and establishes one credential for assignment to any office education course. Individuals who have the academic training necessary to be successful in the classroom but who lack adequate experience in an office occupation for certification may satisfy the work experience requirement through an internship program.

CONCLUSION

The State Board of Education is undertaking a complete study of the recommendations that have been generated through the five-year curriculum review and by Agency staff and other sources. Changes in Board rule will be made in 1991.

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; THE MODIFIED COURT ORDER, CIVIL ACTION 5281, FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, TYLER DIVISION

Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

- (1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;
- (2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a non-segregated basis;
- (3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;
- (4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;
- (5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;
- (6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and
- (7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

In addition to conducting reviews, the Texas Education Agency staff representatives check complaints of discrimination made by a citizen or citizens residing in a school district where it is alleged discriminatory practices have occurred or are occurring.

Where a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is found, the findings are reported to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

TITLE VII, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; EXECUTIVE ORDERS 11246 AND 11375; TITLE IX, 1973 EDUCATION AMENDMENTS; REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AS AMENDED; 1974 AMENDMENTS TO THE WAGE-HOUR LAW EXPANDING THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967; AND VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972 AS AMENDED IN 1974.

It is the policy of the Texas Education Agency to comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, or veteran status (except where age, sex, or handicap constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Texas Education Agency makes positive efforts to employ and advance in employment all protected groups.



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